Dublin, August 12th 1851.

My dear Friend — In the last letter I had from you, you asked me to write to you after I had been in London and to give you my impressions of the Crystal Palace & of all the wonders animate and inanimate to be seen there. Now here I am, come back some weeks, and I am not going to comply with your request, for I have tried it already in my letters to Lay, and am conscious I have made a poor hand of so great a theme. I enjoyed my stay exceedingly. It was to me like a feast of the gods. Your sisters — Mrs. Follen & her sister — Mr Estlin ("your friend") and his admirable daughter, & my own equally admirable wife, were all there — and that grand and good woman Harriet Martineau was there too. So that such a time I never had before, and probably never shall again. If you are subject to the same frailties as the rest of mankind, you have probably like them, gossiped over the faults and foibles of your friends, and you know that I am foolishly addicted to the society of such people as I think particularly delightful. I have a perfect passion for Westons, which they ~~[illegible]~~ ~~perhaps~~ should all seem to know, as I frequently serve as a very good foil to them. The last evening I spent in London seated by your sister Emma, and we talked almost the whole time. It was that memorable evening when our antislavery part were the guests of Harriet Martineau at Mrs Reid's and where nobody but Harriet herself interrupted our talk the whole evening. You need know I greatly like H. M. not for the last book she published in conjunction with

285

Mrs Atkinson (who was there too) and which has brought such a storm of reprobation upon her — but for her moral courage, her kindliness, good nature, benevolence, pluck, and thorough excellence and uprightness. Miss Estlin sent me the last letter she had from you — it came by George Thompson — & I was greatly pleased with you for expressing a very wise resolution you have just come to — to the effect that you would no longer judge people by their professions but by their acts. I am thoroughly persuaded that when we follow any other rule in our estimation of character, we are liable to be mistaken — aye, grossly mistaken. Having heard much of your judgment I now look on you as a newer and more agreeable edition of Solon, and am liable to feel conceited when your decisions agree with my impressions. One evening which your people spent at our lodgings, I begged my brother James to take a seat by Miss Chapman, that he might have a talk with her — he excused himself on the plea that she was too great for him. I told Emma this, and she desired me to inform James that they (that is, the Westons) "thought very little about her!" Only think what "the beloved Emily" are come to — what a height of audacity. My dear wife was greatly delighted and impressed by this woman that Miss Emma spoke so slightingly of — and we have agreed among ourselves that she is the most admirable woman we have ever seen. One morning I had a great talk with Miss Martineau at her lodgings — and she said she would be afraid to live with Mrs Chapman lest, through absolute reliance on her sagacity & good sense, she should lose all reliance on herself. This was much from a thoroughly honest and sincere woman like Miss M. She thinks your sister looks as well and is more admirable than she was in 1835 — that she is in a state of greater self possession — no approach to flutter or excitement.

Ms. A. 9.2.25.105

Yesterday I received a letter from Miss Estlin giving me a glowing and tantalizing account of four delightful days she has just been spending tete a tete in Devonshire Street which she declares were the most complete feast of the kind she ever had. She says Mrs C. was just as usual, but that Caroline shows more evident traces of the great trouble from which under the influence of pleasant accounts from New York they are only just emerging. I am sure your brother is to be envied for being the object of such earnest and genuine affection from such a set of sisters whose regard I would rather enjoy than that of any other set of sisters the wide world over. Miss Estlin you have I doubt not heard abundantly described. She was a discovery to me. I knew her father and had frequently seen him — but I merely heard her mentioned as his daughter and never saw her till my first visit to Bristol early in last year when I went to his house by his pressing invitation in some apprehension of the young lady, who I feared might be merely civil in condescension to her old father's Anti-Slavery hobby, and might secretly look on me with dislike as a bore, and owe me a grudge for aiding and abetting him. This is often the case when the parent has strong tastes which he has failed in communicating to his children. However I was totally and most agreeably disappointed. I have never seen father and daughter so beautifully united. It is heaven to see their unity and affection. There is a playfulness & perfect freedom about their intercourse & a womanly anxiety in his regard for her health and her powers of bodily endurance (for she is by no means strong) which brings the tears into your eyes as you witness it or look back to it. She is a very accomplished woman, extensively instructed in languages but without the least pedantry or pretension & she is entirely ladylike & unaffected.

Ms.A.9.2.25.108

108.a

I need hardly tell you after saying all this, that I found myself quite at home and that the daughter was quite as friendly and cordial as her father, which is saying much. Mr Estlin is a sweet spirited man, there is a simplicity & bonhommie about such I have remarked in men remarkable for firmness of character & resolute adherence to right. Nothing could have been pleasanter than my stay – and I marched off with flying colours – that is to say I was placed so much at my ease, I was so unconstrained and had to feel awkward & foolish so seldom that I was quite on pleasant terms with myself. Society in these countries exists in such an infinite variety of circles, ~~that~~ arranged according to wealth, family, profession, pretension, connections, and things are so regulated by conventionalities amongst them that any body may be excused for being at a loss now and then, especially if his opportunities for associating in the family circles out of his own set has been like my own very limited. But this will tire you

Mrs E. in the last letter I referred to say, Mrs Chapman & Co. are to go to Wiltshire to pay a visit with some friends there – and from thence they will I hope visit Salisbury & Stonehenge. If you ever see my letter in the Standard you will read a full & true account of my visit to that renowned temple – the most mysterious and wonderful relic of past ages in England. And while I was in London I did all I could to urge your sisters to go there also. Now they will have an excellent opportunity. From thence they go to Bristol and thence I half hope to Dublin – for somehow they have a dread in the way which I greatly regret for I have been for years looking to the pleasure of seeing them under my roof. I ~~#~~ admit in perfect sincerity, that we have but little inducement to draw them. We are a sort of come outers and accordingly our social circle is very narrow – though if we had never come out the people within our reach are nothing particular and by no means attractive society. It is very disagreeable to be shut out from the pleasant part of your fellow creatures to those who have as I undoubtedly have, real capacity for taking pleasure in cheerful, pure minded people who are wide awake.

[For a very similar reading, see p. 3 – perhaps unintentional]

Yesterday came a newspaper from my untiring benefactors
the Estlins – It was a Bristol paper and my eye was attracted by some stanzas called "the Conventicle" in the Poets Corner – and then by your name as the writer and then by the stanzas themselves which I think very beautiful & feeling. The maiden is yourself and the power of the plain unadorned building that you speak of has to this present day a witness in myself – I never was the making of a good Quaker. Now I go to meeting almost never – perhaps not twice a year – I don't think with the Friends on almost any subject – and yet the power of association in connexion with the old house that I sat in so often with such regularity in my early days is very strong upon my mind. Miss Estlin also mentions that at last and at length some people have seen Elizabeth Pease, of which I am truly glad. For she is a real worthy and for many years she was the best friend the cause had in England. There are now some as good – but none better. I have a hearty regard for E.P. but for some years past I have had no intercourse and but little correspondence with her. I believe Wendell Phillips is her chief American "Friend" as you are Mr Estlin's.

Can you tell me anything of a Unitarian minister – J. C. Pars who has just called on me. He had no introduction but ~~[illegible]~~ a card that Mr Bishop of Bristol desired him to call. He is a very American looking, lank youngish man. He professes abolitionism of the Garrison stamp – I imagine from his talk that he is friendly, but not very energetic. He called Edmund Quincy whom "your friend" not "our friend" & the phrase attracted my attention. If he brought no introductions from Garrison or yourself, that would be a certain passport to a hearty welcome to bed & board. However I have been very civil & have offered him introductions throughout Ireland and information to guide him on his travels. If he is not the rose himself, he has certainly been near the rose.

I remarked in the last letter Miss Estlin had from you (for do we not live like the apostles, in so far that we enjoy a community of Uncle Harvey's goods?) you mentioned something as a profound secret. This I observe, because it will show you that though these good people in Bristol are such keepers of secrets, they have unlimited confidence in my discretion. I entreat you to follow their example. You may talk as if you were conversing with yourself on matters connected with the cause — and you have nothing to fear. Whilst I will be a great gainer by picking up the crumbs that fall from the rich "maidens" table.

I heartily rejoice with you that your brother is so far recovered that your sisters begin to feel as they did before his alarming illness. And you will in your turn be interested to hear that my sister Deborah had a prosperous voyage for the first month of her long journey. For we had a letter from her, written whilst in 8° N. Lat. (in the parallel of Sierra Leone) in which she says that had got on comfortably so far and that compared with the voyages out to America and back it was ~~___~~ like a party of pleasure. They were unhappy going & unhappy returning from America — unhappy and discomfited. They sailed for Australia in a hopeful spirit and with more agreeable expectations of the people & the climate

Mrs Webb is in Waterford with her sister — one of our children with her — another at school in Chesterfield, England — one son & my sister in law Maria Waring at home with me — and my remaining son just gone off with a party to see London & the marvellous Exhibition — and so farewell

Ever truly yours

Richd D Webb

Can you tell me any thing of George Bradburn? I have heard nothing of him for years.

Ms. A. 9.2.25.108